

**Series:** Hebrews

**Lesson:** #51

**Title:** Exploits of the Faithful

**Text:** Hebrews 11: 32-40

**Date:** Sunday, September 21, 2008

**Place:** Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Princeton, New Jersey

**Hebrews 11: 32: And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: 33: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34: Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35: Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36: And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38: (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and *in* mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth. 39: And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 40: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.**

**Turn to Judges 6: We only have to look at God's dealings with Gedeon to understand the Hebrew writer.**

In these verses we have an earthly illustration of the spiritual warfare through which God saves his people.

**Judges 6: 1: And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.**

- Children of Israel are a type of God's true Israel--the multitude he put in Christ before the world began and shall save.
- We did evil in God's sight. In our first representative Adam all died. Then we came forth doing evil IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD.
- And the Lord delivered us into the hand of Midian 7 years--Midian is a type of Satan and his army, this world of false, idolatrous religion--the Lord's people are in captivity until the 7th year, the year he discovers to us that our perfect acceptance in the sight of the Lord is in Christ.

Our text in Hebrews says: **Through faith subdued kingdoms**--the kingdom of the Midian enemy is a type of the spiritual kingdom which only our Redeemer and King can subdue.

**Judges 6: 2: And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: *and* because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which *are* in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds.**

- We could not and can not prevail--Midian prevailed against the Lord's people.
- These dens and caves and strongholds represent all the various ways we try to save ourselves--they are less than the one Refuge who is Christ.
- Anytime we attempt to come to God expecting acceptance due to our sincerity, our good works, our religious beliefs, etc...we have found an earthly den and cave and stronghold--it is working unrighteousness before God.

**Judges 6: 3: And *so* it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them; 4: And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. 5: For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; *for* both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it. 6: And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD.**

- All our sowing in our natural religion produced no fruit.
- Our enemy would not allow us to produce any fruit--the sin we are prevented it, our self-righteous thought that we could produce fruit polluted our seed, multitudes of religious ideas, of religious so-called friends--these and a hosts of more enemies came upon us and left us destitute.
- In frustration we cried out unto the Lord to help. And the Lord sent help.

**Judges 6: 7: And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites, 8: That the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; 9: And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land; 10: And I said unto you, I *am* the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.**

- God's weapons are not carnal but spiritual.
- So when you cry for help He sends his prophet--his preacher--and the message is not about your obedience, but **thus saith the LORD God of Israel--God's Word of Truth.**
- The message is that the JEHOVAH God--the covenant God--is the Deliverer--**I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; 9: And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land**
- The Lord purposed to leave you dwelling in this land where false gods abound all around you. But the message of God's messenger is that in looking to the numbers that those

false gods attract, the growth of the congregations where those false gods are raised up, the apparent strength of the people who worship those gods, you fear their god instead of the God of all strength--and you have disobeyed God--**And I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.**

- Fear of false gods is rampant where pastors and congregations try to stop the mouths of lions by their means and methods.
- They could not stop the mouths of lions by the strength of their hand, they could not quench the violent fire of indignation raging in their hearts and the hearts of their enemies, they lived by the carnal sword but could not conquer what only the spiritual sword conquers.
- When they cried for help, God sent his messenger declaring that he alone saves, but that is not the help the carnal heart desires and the multitude rejected the prophet of the LORD.

But the Lord's word does not return to him without accomplishing the LORD'S purpose.

**Judges 6: 11: And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.**

- Gideon is out working in the wheat field behind his dad's winepress.
- He's thinking on what he heard that prophet preach yesterday...And there came an angel of the LORD...to make that Word of the LORD'S prophet effectual in his heart.
- We see a figure of the Holy Spirit in this angel of the Lord.

Now notice how the LORD saves a sinner.

**Judges 6: 12: And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. 13: And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.**

- Gideon heard the LORD speak through his prophet.
- Gideon said, "I'm everything but a mighty man of valor. I'm getting exactly what I deserve."
- Now listen to what the LORD said to him.

**Judges 6: 14: And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?**

- The LORD calls this attitude of no self-esteem might?
  - The LORD calls this attitude of no fleshly-strength might?
  - The LORD calls this confession of being justly forsaken by God as strength?
- THIS IS STRENGTH BECAUSE ONLY WHEN WE SEE OURSELVES THE WAY GIDEON SAW HIMSELF, CAN WE SEE CHRIST WHO IS OUR STRENGTH. SO YES,

THIS ACKNOWLEDGING OF THE UTTER DEPRAVITY OF THE FLESH, IS WHAT GOD CALLS STRENGTH.

Listen to Gideon's description of himself and his absolute inability.

**Judges 6: 15: And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.**

Now that the Lord has revealed to Gideon that he can not do what God commands him to do, now the Lord God declares how this work shall surely be accomplished.

**Judges 6: 16: And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.**

- Man's way of gaining power is to exalt the flesh--we flatter ourselves and other men, we are politicians by nature, and we call that which we accomplish in this way progress.
- God's way to prepare a man for his use--is to bring him down to behold there is nothing good in his flesh, nor is there any good in any man's flesh.

**2 Corinthians 12:10:...when I am weak, then am I strong.**

- Only when God discover's our destitute weakness does he discover to us Christ who is our Strength.

**Philippians 4: 13: I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.**

Gideon desired a sign that God would indeed prove the Lord was with Gideon in spite of Gideon. Because Gideon knew himself and how he would fail if left to himself, he wanted confirmation that this thing was by grace and grace alone. So Gideon prepared an offering to give to the Lord.

**Judges 6: 17: And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me. 18: Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again. 19: And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it.**

How was it that God showed Gideon the sign that Gideon was accepted with God on the bases of grace and not anything in Gideon or his works?

**Judges 6: 20: And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so.**

- Gideon's sacrifice, no matter how carefully prepared lacked what God required to be accepted—it was not perfect. It must be perfect to be accepted of God.
- So God commands him to put the offering upon this rock, and pour out the broth--there is no need for man's effort to make the offering acceptable.

**Judges 6: 21: Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that *was* in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight.**

- The Rock typifies the Son of God--the Altar of Deity.
- The flesh typifies Christ, the Son of man--bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.
- The unleavened cakes typifies the perfection of Christ in the flesh--no leaven, no rising up in defiance, no hypocrisy within.
- Notice where the fire came from--fire rose up out of the rock--this is a mystery only grace can reveal but no man took Christ's life, but when he made his offering for sin his own justice rose up out of himself and consumed the flesh and the perfect sacrifice.
- The Hebrew writer says: these men and women through faith, **quenched the violence of fire**...because faith trust Christ alone who himself quenched the violence of God's fiery wrath against his people.
- **Then the angel of the LORD**--or the LORD has he is also called in this scripture--**departed out his sight**--typifying the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ in triumph.

Now listen to Gideon's joy.

**Judges 6: 22: And when Gideon perceived that he *was* an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face. 23: And the LORD said unto him, Peace *be* unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. 24: Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovahshalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.**

- In the Rock and the Flesh the angel of the LORD revealed in Gideon that the LORD's covenant with him was in Christ, by grace, and would never be altered by Gideon's triumph's or his failures.

Now learn what the first obedient act of the believer is.

**Judges 6: 25: And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that *is* by it:**

Once the Lord revealed that the Peace of God toward Gideon was in Christ the Rock, the Lord's first command to Gideon was his first commandment.—thou shalt have no other gods before me--

- He sent Gideon to his father who worshipped Baal--first, take away your father's offerings, his young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old; secondly, throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath; thirdly, cut down the grove by it
- That is the order of false religion--man's offering, offered to man's god, in the grove or covering or shade which man has grown with his own hand.
- The LORD declared that has to be done away with.

Now listen to God's order.

**Judges 6: 26: And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place,**

- The ordered place is to first come to Christ the Rock, the Altar of God.

**Judges 6: 26:...and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down.**

- Secondly, offer to God that which satisfies God--this burned bullock typifies Christ
- In other words, come to Christ and offer God nothing but the blood of Christ your Redeemer.

**Judges 6: 27: Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the LORD had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night.**

Point out something.

- This place is not in the tabernacle yet this is the ordered place of the LORD God
- Gideon was not a high priest, yet the LORD commanded him to offer a sacrifice
- This was at night instead of the day time the Lord commanded before
- There are several other difference between the way Gideon was commanded of the LORD and the old Levitical instructions.

The point is when the LORD saves a man he makes all things new in Christ. He approaches God in Christ and no longer in the law, at his own altar, in the imagination of his heart but in spirit and in truth.

- All of this is a type of what believer's do in declaring to religious sinner's that Christ is God's Altar, God's offering, God's satisfaction, God's delight.
- By simply declaring the Word, worshipping him at his ordered place in Christ, **kingdoms are subdued, righteousness worked, the promises of God obtained, the mouths of lions are stopped, the violence of fire is quenched, the edge of the sword is escaped, out weakness God makes sinner's strong, to wax valiant in fight, to turn to flight the armies of the aliens. Women receive their spiritual dead children raised to life again.**

### Application:

1. Will the race set before you be nothing but peace and harmony, believer?

**Judges 6: 28: And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built. 29: And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they enquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. 30: Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it.**

2. But there will be great joy as the LORD saves and adds to the church as he will. Listen to Gideon's father who once served Baal.

**Judges 6: 31: And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst *it is yet morning*: if he *be* a god, let him plead for himself, because *one* hath cast down his altar. 32: Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.**

3. But what do we do in the face of all the host of enemies who hate our Lord Jesus Christ?

**Judges 6:33: Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel.**

- So Gideon worked out a compromise with the enemies of Christ the Rock?
- God made good his promise and Gideon used the only weapon the Lord gave him.

**Judges 6:34: But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him.**

**Look at one more beautiful, instructive picture:** He went into battle with a small army that the Lord wittled down to 300 men. He carried an empty pitcher with a lamp in it in his left hand and a trumpet in the right.

**Judges 7: 18: When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that *are* with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, *The sword* of the LORD, and of Gideon**

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty--this is the gospel of Christ--the sword of the Lord.

What about the empty pitcher with the light in it--that's typifies a believer--we are fragile vessels filled with Christ the Light. As he blew the trumpet they broke the pitchers so that only the light remained.

- That is what God did when he broke Gideon's fleshly pride--he broke the pitcher
- And Christ the Light shined
- When Gideon blew the trumpet of this gospel
- God defeated their enemies as a type of God breaking all fleshly "pitchers" till all is left is the Light of Christ.

4. Do you want to counted faithful as this roll call of faith? Do you want to take part in that better resurrection which it to life eternal rather than to the second death? To subdue kingdoms, to have your children raised from the dead?

- This is obedience to God--believe on him who conquerors all his enemies and saves all his people by free and sovereign grace. This is obedience to God--stay on him in faith and be not moved away by fear of man made gods. This is obedience to God--blow the trumpet of Christ our Righteousness, our Justification, our Sanctification, our Wisdom, our

Redemption, our All. This is the sword which breaks the fleshly pitchers till one day all that will be left is Christ the Light.

**Hebrews 12: 1: Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2: Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.**



